Oxford House

In the Washington, D.C. area there are twenty-one group houses which are home to over 200 individuals recovering from alcoholism and drug addiction. The Houses began 13 years ago, when a county-run halfway house closed, and have expanded solely from internally generated funds. It is truly a self-supported operation and democratically run like a college fraternity or sorority except members who relapse and use alcohol or drugs are thrown out. Each individual house is autonomous (like an AA group) and elects officers from its own members, who can only serve in office for six month periods of time. Each individual house is self-supporting. Each individual house has a charter from Oxford House, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation, which is the umbrella organization that enables each house to share its experience, strength and hope with every other house.

The corporation has two entities: (1) the Oxford House Service Board, which helps new houses get started and work together; and (2) the Oxford House Revolving Fund which loans start-up money to new houses. States will have similar funds to provide start-up loans to four or more recovering individuals under the new Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, P.L.100-690.

Experience has shown that Oxford House fills a void in the field of treatment of alcoholism or drug addiction by providing transitional housing in a supportive environment free of alcohol or drug use. Simply stated the concept recognizes that relapse is one of the great deterrents to recovery from alcohol or drug addiction Many individuals in the recovery process do better when given time and a safe place to live to re-enforce the principle of abstinence fostered by AA and NA.

Oxford House is a supplement to -- not a replacement of -- other treatment facilities including traditional half-way houses. In October 1987 Oxford House branched out from the Washington area by starting a house in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. It has worked as well as the houses in Washington and demonstrated that the concept can be replicated throughout the country. Oxford House owns no property. All of its houses are rented. It is classified as family-residential for zoning purposes since no formal treatment is undertaken in the individual houses.

Oxford House is not affiliated with AA or NA and has neither of those meetings within its houses. However, individual members of Oxford House attend an average of six AA or NA meetings a week. Moreover, the organization is patterned after AA and governance of the organization is through the development of consensus or group conscience.

If you would like more information about how to start an Oxford House in your area write or call the following contact people:

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Oxford House, Inc.